



Department of Human Resource Management

# Worklife Elevated

State of Utah Employee Newsletter



Where is this picture? See page 8.

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## Introducing Kristen Cox, Executive Director Department of Workforce Services

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On March 5, 2007 Governor Jon M. Huntsman, Jr. announced a simultaneous shift in his Cabinet by naming the Department of Workforce Services Executive Director Tani Pack Downing as his new General Counsel, and Kristen Cox as the new Director of Workforce Services. When Tani announced the change to her executive staff, she said that if she could think of one person who she would feel comfortable to pass along the DWS reins to, it was Kristen Cox. Coincidentally, she had recently seen a profile of Kristen on a prime time television news magazine when Kristen was the Republican candidate for the Lt. Governor of Maryland. She was immediately impressed by her resume, her intelligence, her presence and her compassion, and, said Tani, "she's blind."

Clearly, Kristen Cox's lack of sight has not affected her vision. Her resume shows a career arc that can only be described as meteoric. In less than 10 years she has gone from president of the nonprofit organization, the National Federation of the Blind of Utah, to running for Lt. Governor of Maryland with the incumbent Governor Robert Ehrlich. Now she's back at home in Utah overseeing one of the largest agencies in state government.

Kristen Cox was born in Bellevue, Washington. While growing up in Utah, she gradually lost most of her vision starting about age 11 due to a degenerative genetic condition caused by a rare recessive trait, Stargardt disease.

After graduation from BYU with a degree in educational psychology with a certificate in special education in 1995, she went to work for the Utah chapter of the National Federation of the Blind. In 1999 she moved to Baltimore, Maryland to become Assistant Director of Governmental Affairs for the National Federation of the Blind.

In 2002 Kristen was appointed by President George W. Bush as Special Assistant to the Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services Administration in the United States Department of Education where she developed national initiatives to promote the employment and independence of individuals with disabilities.

Kristen caught the attention of Governor Ehrlich when he was a congressman from Maryland and she was lobbying Congress for the National Federation of the Blind. She joined the Ehrlich administration in 2003 as Director of the Office for Individuals with Disabilities. On July 1, 2004 the Maryland State Senate confirmed Kristen Cox as Secretary of the nation's first cabinet level Department of Disabilities.

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## Spotlight on the DWS Workforce Information Division

Compiled by DWS Information Staff



The Workforce Information office in the Department of Workforce Services produces a wide variety of labor market information.

Labor market information (LMI) encompasses the collecting, analyzing, reporting and publishing of information about economic conditions and trends such as the unemployment rate, job growth and wage levels. It also includes information on the types of jobs and industries in Utah, how they are changing, and the available workforce.

Why should state employees and

agency administrators care about LMI? Labor market information is a powerful resource that can assist with presentations to the legislature, other state agencies, employers and many others.

*Everyone uses LMI, whether they are aware of it or not. Some examples of how employers can use labor market information are wage rates for occupations they employ, benefits offered in their industry, and the availability of workers. Also, employers can find data on current local and national economic conditions such as information needed to support decisions for expanding or downsizing and the rate of labor turnover.*

Labor market information is very valuable to policy makers as well. Economic activity and overall health of the economy is critical for estimating tax revenue and gearing services to the right level. It can also determine how many workers are unemployed, additional workforce training needed, and the productivity of the workforce.

For job seekers and students, knowing the types of jobs in demand and how much the positions pay is key to deciding on a career. Students can make an informed choice by researching the skills the jobs require and the types of training available and the projections of growth or decline in specific occupations.

The department's Workforce Information office publishes its data in print format and on our website: [www.jobs.utah.gov](http://www.jobs.utah.gov). Some of our publications include:

**Trendlines** – a bi-monthly magazine on Utah's economy

**Workforce News** – a quarterly regional newsletter on local economies

**Utah Careers** – a complete career guide for adults

**Wage data on-line** – in the Utah Economic Data Viewer (UEDV)

Add this site to your favorites; it's constantly updated with the latest labor market intelligence for every county in the state of Utah.

## Kristen Cox, Executive Director, DWS, cont.

(Continued from page 1)

About her new challenges at DWS Kristen had this to say. "We're going through a significant change right now with the consolidation of medical eligibility workers into our department. We have to accomplish that without any drop off in service, and not lose focus on the other programs we administer. We serve some of the most vulnerable citizens in the state, and it's very important to me to make sure we continue to do everything we can to

help them become successful." And, with a nod to her predecessor she says, "I've got some big high heels to fill."

Kris with her husband Randy and their two sons, Tanner and Riley are in the process of moving the household back home to Salt Lake City from Maryland.





## DWS Employee Profile — Cathy Iriart

By Jolinda Ortega and Fran Cannard



Cathy Iriart started her career in Price almost 19 years ago and has spent time as a lead worker, trainer and supervisor. She sees her primary

role as one of building relationships, whether with co-workers or customers. She feels customer service starts with genuinely liking people, coupled with respect and a willingness to listen. Cathy spends much of her workday on the phone listening to customers and mentoring the newer employees in her current position as an Eligibility Worker in the St. George Employment Center. According to Cathy, "DWS has always made me feel special and valued and that is what I try to share with our customers and my coworkers."

Ask anyone who knows her and you are likely to hear words like fun, humorous, witty and entertaining to describe her. Then quickly, those characterizations are apt to be pared with words like dedicated, helpful, and a real go to person. Cathy is all of these, and more.

To what does Cathy attribute her success? "Attitude is everything," she says. "Each change is a challenge and as one of the long-term employees, I see it as my responsibility to share what I know and help provide a positive atmosphere for the newer workers." She's a natural leader. For those who are into NASCAR, Cathy figures she and the other experienced workers are like the pace car, and she makes it a point to be out in front, leading by example.

Always optimistic, Cathy feels it is important that others see her as knowledgeable and approachable, so

they feel comfortable coming to her to ask questions. She encourages others not to sweat the small stuff, and is openly appreciative of the support she receives from the office and region management teams. According to Cathy, "our management leads with a positive attitude that starts from the top and flows down." Iriart characterizes DWS as "an excellent place to work; opportunities are open to anyone who makes the effort to show their interest."

Jolinda Ortega, Cathy's supervisor says, "When we have a staff meeting or a special activity, Cathy always helps everyone get involved and have fun. Cathy is always conscientious, but rarely serious, a special talent she shares that helps makes learning new information a joy instead of drudgery."

## 9th Annual Utah Managers Conference

By Sherry Saracino

The Department of Human Resource Management, Utah Society of Certified Public Managers, and Utah Policy Partnership are pleased to announce the 9th Annual Manager's Conference at the Davis Conference Center, on Tuesday, May 22, 2007. This year's conference theme is Faces of the Future - Leaders of Tomorrow's Workforce. Our exciting speakers will be:

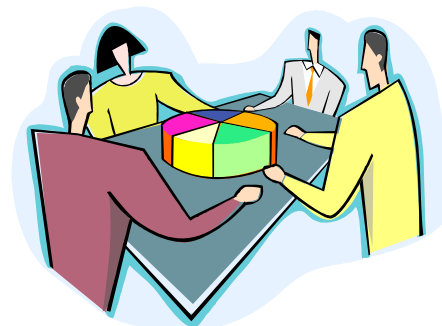
**Ken Miller** - If you want to think about government work in a completely different way and learn the

tools and techniques to identify improvement opportunities, make changes and create buy-in, come hear Ken Miller, former Missouri State Director of Performance Improvement and author of the book "We Don't Make Widgets: Overcoming the Myths That Keep Government from Radically Improving" share his wisdom.

**Scott Wood** - will present "Social Signposts: The Key to Leadership for a Changing Workforce" which has been revolutionizing how corporations and government organizations approach leadership for the future.

**Governor Jon Huntsman Jr.** - will be our special guest speaker.

The conference is open to all; however, venue capacity is limited. Standard registration is \$139.00, and



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## Wages + Benefits = Total Compensation

By Dave Lewis

When I first received the assignment to write an article on compensation for the "Worklife Elevated" newsletter, I immediately thought of the technical side of compensation administration. There are many interesting compensation-related topics to address. I could describe the survey tools we use at DHRM to gather data and compare wages to the external market. Or, I could address how the various pay proposals are developed and presented to the State Legislature. Other topics abound - the job classification system, development of pay ranges, or the impact of a COLA on wage compression.

I quickly came to the conclusion that I was probably the only one that would get excited about this stuff. As my mind wandered, desperately

searching for a topic that would be interesting for my fellow State employees to read, I recalled my own situation, and my decision to return to work for the State of Utah (I recently returned to State employment after a stint in the private sector). I came back for a variety of reasons, but one significant consideration was the pay package. Even though this article documents decisions I made, I think it is something others could relate to, and I hope it will be somewhat interesting to you. At the least, it will give you something to think about.

When I speak of the "pay package", I am referring to the total compensation provided to us as State employees - cash and benefits. Generally, wages paid by private-sector employers are greater than wages paid by public-sector employers. Conversely, governmental entities tend to pay more of the cost of



the employee benefit program compared to private companies. These statements are both broad-based generalities, and exceptions exist, but they are true for the most part, at least in my opinion. As I found out during my private sector adventure, there is a very real economic value to a comprehensive benefits program. In other words, the funding the State provides for our benefits is money in our pockets. Real money.

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Open Enrollment

By Kimberly Diamond-Smith



The State of Utah's open enrollment period for insurance and voluntary benefits runs from April 18, 2007 to May 31, 2007. All enrollment forms should be completed and submitted by June 1, 2007.

Available benefits include four medical plans, three dental plans, two vision plans, group term life and accident plans, and various voluntary benefits. For more information on

these plans, please attend one of the benefits fairs starting on April 19, 2007 (see agency HR Representatives for the Benefits Fair schedule). Individuals who wish to maintain their current coverage do not need to re-enroll in any of the benefits. Individuals who wish to make changes should complete an enrollment form, with the changes only, and submit it by June 1, 2007. PEHP has one enrollment form for medical, dental, and vision. There is a separate enrollment form for life insurance and accidental death and dismemberment insurance. For new enrollees on the Group Term Life Program, an Authorization for

Disclosure of Medical Information form must be filled out.

Voluntary benefits include Healthy Utah, pehpPLUS, WeeCare, Beehive Credit Union, Mt. America Credit Union, Access Development, UPEA, UAGE, Liberty Mutual Home and Auto, Met Life Home and Auto, and Hyatt Legal. Enrollment forms for each of these plans should be completed and submitted directly to the applicable provider. PEHP does NOT handle the enrollment for voluntary benefits. Individuals who wish to cancel or change any of these plans should also notify the provider directly.





## Wages + Benefits = Total Compensation, cont.

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### MEDICAL AND DENTAL BENEFITS

The total monthly cost of medical and dental benefits (family coverage) provided to employees of the State is approximately \$1,100 per month. I am enrolled in Altius/Summit Care and PEHP Preferred Choice dental. Coverage for my family costs me \$23 per month. In my last job, I was required to pay \$150 per month for medical and dental benefits. Not only was my payroll deduction higher, but I had to pay a \$500 medical deductible for myself and each family member. After I paid \$500 out of my pocket, the plan paid 70% of eligible expenses, and I paid the remaining 30%. Because the State pays a greater share of my health care benefits, I have an extra \$127 in my pocket every month. When you consider the lower amounts I pay out-of-pocket for deductibles and coinsurance, the value increases even more.

### DISABILITY AND LIFE INSURANCE

The long-term disability insurance policy my previous employer provided was good coverage, but it cost me \$60 per month. The State pays the premium for my PEHP long-term disability coverage, so I save that \$60 savings each and every month. The income protection provided to me is the same. So, the premium savings is money in my pocket.

The State provides \$25,000 of basic term life insurance, which is fairly common among all employers. Many employers, including the State of Utah, provide additional coverage in excess of the basic for employees to purchase through payroll deduction. Although the insurance type for the additional coverage is usually term coverage, some employers do offer Universal Life, or some variation of Whole Life. A

measurable cost difference does not exist for my cost of life insurance between what the State provides, and my previous employers.

### RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Comparing retirement plans is a real challenge. There are many different types of plans and plan features. Apples to apples comparisons are difficult to calculate. One thing is for certain, though, the retirement plan we have as employees of the State of Utah is better than any plan I have participated in over the course of my career. A company pension plan – provided they still sponsor one – typically accrues benefits of 1% to 1.5% for each year of service, multiplied by average salary. Often, plan benefits are reduced by social security benefits received.

To derive an accurate estimate of the differential value of a private retirement plan versus the Utah Retirement Systems Noncontributory Plan, we'd need an actuary to analyze the relative plan features and benefit formulas and make a calculation. In the absence of an actuary's estimate, my educated guess is that the difference is about 6%. The 1.5% 401(k) contribution that the State kicks in makes the retirement benefits even more attractive. All in all, I estimate that our retirement program adds about 7.5% to my pay by providing me retirement benefits I do not have to fund for myself.

These estimates do not include any provision for continuation of medical coverage as a retiree of the State of Utah. Although our retiree medical benefits were significantly modified by HB213, we still have coverage available. The majority of organizations I have worked for do not continue any type of medical benefit coverage after retirement.



### IN CONCLUSION

These are only a few of the benefits available to us as State employees – the “higher profile” benefits. I have not addressed the liberal paid time off, personal wellness programs like Healthy Utah and Employee Assistance/Counseling, vendor discount arrangements, home, auto, and long term care insurance, or tuition assistance. There are many, many more. There are also tax implications to consider that I haven't addressed here. If I received a bigger paycheck, but paid more for my benefits, my tax liability would increase. Amounts paid by the State for benefits are non-taxable to me (for retirement benefits, income tax is deferred). Bottom line? If I worked somewhere else, my wages might be greater, but I'd pay more for benefits. Just because you make more money, doesn't necessarily mean you come out ahead.

I encourage you to think about your compensation as both wages/salary and benefits – a “Total Compensation” concept. I'm not trying to make you believe that you have a “good deal” working for the State. I would much rather give you facts and let you come to your own conclusions.

Personally, I am glad to be back, and I am looking forward to working with you. Thanks for reading. You may agree with me, or not, and that's alright. Regardless, I welcome your comments. You can email me at [davelewis@utah.gov](mailto:davelewis@utah.gov).



## Let's Talk Ethics

By Brooke Baker

In an effort to improve the ethical standards of public employees and protect public employees from the perception of wrongdoing, Governor Jon M. Huntsman, Jr., issued a new executive order on February 14, 2007, *"Establishing an Ethics Policy for Executive Branch Agencies and Executive Branch Employees"*.

The first section of the order addresses the Prohibition Against the Receipt of Gifts. This section of the order states that employees covered by the order are prohibited from accepting gifts or other compensation that might be intended to influence or reward the individual in the performance of office business. There are exceptions as outlined in Utah Code 67-16-5, which provides that gifts of up to \$50 may be allowed in certain circumstances. Additionally, the order does not cancel out the restrictions imposed by Utah Code, Title 63, Chapter 56.

The second section addresses Nepotism in Hiring and Contracting. The order prohibits employees from taking part in any hiring or employment decisions relating to a family member. Employees must disclose their relationship to their supervisor and must be recused from any and all discussions or decisions relating to the family member. This prohibition also applies to contracting decisions that involve a family member or any entity in which a family member owns or controls 10% or more of the stock of such entity. The term "family member" is defined within the executive order.

The third and final section of the order covers the Prohibition Against Lobbying Executive Branch Department or Agency Employees. An employee covered by the order may not knowingly permit a former employee, previously subject to the order, to lobby the current employee unless a two year period has passed since the former employee's

employment was terminated. The term "to lobby" and "lobbying" are defined within the executive order.

This article is a summary of the actual executive order. All employees are encouraged to read the new executive order in its entirety. The order can be found at the following website: [www.rules.utah.gov/execdoks/2007/ExecDoc125190.htm](http://www.rules.utah.gov/execdoks/2007/ExecDoc125190.htm). If you have questions, please feel free to contact Brooke Baker, HR Liability Specialist, at [bbaker@utah.gov](mailto:bbaker@utah.gov).



## COMPENSATION INCREASES FOR STATE EMPLOYEES

Good news for all State employees!! The legislature granted all State employees a 3.5% Cost-of-Living Adjustment for fiscal year 2008. They also granted agencies an additional 1.5% discretionary money to be spent on whatever "hot spots" the agency is experiencing. Agencies are now working on how to distribute these additional funds. Also funded was 100% of the State's portion of the benefits cost increases.

What this means for State employees is that effective 6/30/07 we will all see an increase to our salaries of approximately 3.5%. This increase will appear on the paycheck for July 27, 2007. Those employees who receive discretionary monies will see the increase dependent upon when your agency decides to grant the increase. The discretionary money can be spent any time during fiscal year 2008.

While the State did fund the entire 100% of the State's portion of benefits increases, employees will see a slight rise in their premium amounts. Employees pay a percentage of the total premium, which means that whenever the total amount increases, so does the dollar amount associated with that percentage.

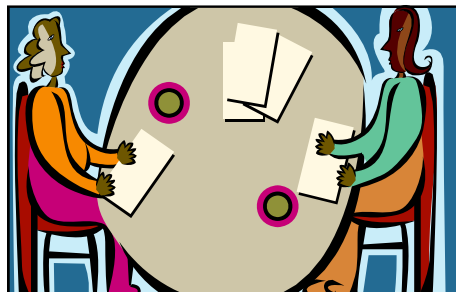
For more detail on the compensation and benefits details for fiscal year 2008 and to see the new General and Longevity Pay Plans, please go to [www.dhrm.utah.gov](http://www.dhrm.utah.gov).



## Performance Evaluations

By Jamie Nagle

It's that time of year - employee evaluations. Many supervisors and managers, as well as employees, dread sitting down to review past performance and setting expectations for future performance. Performance evaluations don't have to be painful or unpleasant. In fact, they can be effective tools for managers and provide important feedback to employees. The first step is to foster a positive attitude about appraisals. Next, it is important to recognize that performance appraisals are not just about employees, it is also a tool for supervisors to provide ongoing guidance to their employees. Supervisors should be working with their employees in the formulation of goals that will help the employee realize the value of their individual contributions to the overall success of the agency, and, providing continual feedback to the employee about their performance.



Performance evaluations are not entirely about pay. It would be foolish to believe that employees don't desire a salary increase for producing superior results. While pay is one engagement factor, there are several others that can be reinforced through a successful performance evaluation. Supervisors should be sure that an individual performance plan answers the three questions that every employee needs answered. 1. What's my job? 2. How am I doing? 3. Do you care? Successfully answer those three questions and be prepared to see a marked change in employee engagement and increased productivity.

### Here are a few tips for Performance Evaluation:

- Be honest and fair in evaluating employees
- Be consistent in your approach
- Give your comments, both positive and constructive.
- Make comments consistent with rankings and achievements
- Be realistic
- Rate the employee's performance, not their attitude.
- Set strategic goals **with** the employee that help identify individual contributions to agency goals.
- Use the evaluation to motivate employees, rather than just to critique their performance.
- No surprises - this means constant feedback throughout the evaluation period.
- Always remember to answer the three questions: What's my Job? How am I doing? Do you care?

## 9th Annual Utah Managers Conference, cont.

(Continued from page 3)

USCPM member registration is \$119.00. All registrants will receive a copy of Mr. Miller's book. The conference begins at 7:30 a.m. and ends at 3:45 p.m. A *Continuing Education Certificate of Attendance* will be provided upon request through USCPM. Participants will need to follow up with the organization for which they hold a designation for credit applicability. Please direct your

requests for certificates to Suzette Green-Wright with the Insurance Department. Register on-line at [http://community.utah.gov/apps/managers\\_conference.pdf](http://community.utah.gov/apps/managers_conference.pdf) or go to [www.dhrm.utah.gov](http://www.dhrm.utah.gov) and click on the link for the 9th Annual Utah Manager's Conference. For questions, contact DHRM at 538-3025.





## Utah Saves – A Resource for Savvy Savers

*According to statistics provided by Utah Saves:*



The national savings rate has fallen below 0% for the first time since the Great Depression. Half of all those nearing retirement have less than \$10,000 in a 401(k) type retirement plan. Americans are up to their wazoos in debt.

Get excited about saving! Think about enrolling with Utah Saves through their website, [www.utahsaves.org](http://www.utahsaves.org) where you will find many useful resources for financial management, such as the Home Wealth Indicator: <http://www.utahsaves.org/strategies/homeownership/homewealth.asp> Click on this link and use it to calculate the present and future wealth of your home.

**On the front cover: Sunset at Cedar Breaks National Monument** (Utah Office of Tourism website [www.travel.utah.gov](http://www.travel.utah.gov))

We'd love to hear from you. Please submit feedback, suggestions, or ideas for future articles to:  
[HRNewsletter@utah.gov](mailto:HRNewsletter@utah.gov)

DHRM is adding value to the State of Utah by:

- Increasing Customer Service
- Increasing Efficiency
- Decreasing Liability

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## Be In The Know of UDOT Construction Projects this Summer!

Coming the first week of May, employees can go to:

[www.udot.utah.gov/knowwhereknowwhy](http://www.udot.utah.gov/knowwhereknowwhy) for information about the Top 20 construction projects going on throughout the state. On this site, they can obtain information about work projects, lane restrictions and scheduled road closures throughout the construction season. Additional information can be found under the "Projects and Studies" tab on the UDOT website.

